1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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and outsiders are then allowed to enter the camp itself. The mother of the dead individual paints herself with red ocher, as does the female mari of the person. This is to remove the taboo from them so that they can go out and gather fire wood and water as well as food. Before that time they must stay in the camp. The mother is not supposed to paint herself before the grave post is put up. If she does, and puts water on herself to make the red ocher spread, the body of the dead person will not decompose but stay firm so that the bones cannot be painted and properly treated. "The mother that belongs to that dead man cries every night for him. She cries a long time, maybe until one rain is over. All the people go back now to take out that dead man. They take the paper bark off his body. It has a very strong smell. Some people don't like to see that, but some people have strong hearts. We keep the young people away and the women do not look."

Exhumation of the Bones.—After a minimum of two or three months or a maximum of a season the body is exhumed under the direction of the father or some near relative of the dead man. If it is a child and has been buried beside the house, the father pulls the house down and makes a windbreak with it. The women relatives sit on one side of the windbreak and men on the other. They sit so that the wind blows between the male and female lines. At the head of the grave a small fire is built out of wet material so that it will smoke. The smoking fire, with the aid of a strong wind, prevents the stench from being too heavy. It is believed that no one should walk through the smoke that comes from the fires and grave, for the stench of the dead would make him ill. The fires are lit not only to kill the smell of decaying flesh but also so that the wind won't blow the odor a great distance, for it is believed that the stench is consumed by the smoke. The windbreak acts as a screen in front of the women so that they cannot see what is taking place. If an adult is being disinterred the screen is placed in the same way, but the material is not from the house of the parents. The mokul bapa (father's sister) can and does sit on the side of the men.

Strips of paper bark are made ready on which to place the bones. The bark is cut into sections. The inside sections of the stringy-bark tree are broken into handfuls of waste with which to clean the bones, and water is brought in large melon shells.

The men sing the garma cycle of songs while the women dance to a monotonous syncopated rapid rhythm: alternately one arm touches the head, and the hand of the other arm is lowered to the abdo-

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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342 tied together with pandanus leaf. The free ends are stuck into two holes which have been dug about four feet apart, to form the hut's front arch. Other sticks are planted about a foot apart in a semicircle in back of this arch. These are bent over and attached to the center of the main front arch, forming a hollow quarter-globe, whose closed side is always to windward. A woman then gathers paper bark, covers the whole of the skeleton with several layers, and lays medium-sized logs against the bark structure to keep the wind from blowing the cover away. A fire is always [372] made in front of the structure to keep off flies, mosquitoes, sand flies, and other insects. Outside, at the entrance of the hut, one sees singing sticks [351] (bil-mel), paper-bark receptacles, and other such articles, and here spear-thrower and spears are stuck when the man is present, while inside personal baskets of the men and women are kept.

[462] *Type 2.*—Men are more active in the building of the second type of house. They select a large stringy-barked eucalyptus tree, cut the bark off its trunk for a distance of eight to ten feet, and strip off and discard the outer bark. Six to eight pieces of the inside bark are usually gathered. Two parallel trenches are dug and the ends of the bark placed in them so that the whole forms a symmetrical archway. Usually two or three pieces of bark are put in the row, making a house with a total length of about seven feet. One end of the house is also covered with stringy bark, leaving one end open for a door. The structure is covered with a heavy coating of paper bark. Sand, stones, and logs are placed against the sides to function much like flying buttresses. They serve to keep the house firm in strong winds. The ground on the inside and in front of the house is hollowed out slightly. The excavating process continues through the winter months, until there is a rather deep hole where the occupants live, and a small-sized embankment in front from sand deposited on the "door step." All houses are built upon slightly raised ground where the sand is soft and comfortable.

Type 3.—This form of house is really a hybrid, and consists of the first and second types placed together, with the first forming the end and the second the length, making a larger and more elaborate hut.

Type 4.—Two sticks about four and one-half feet high are cut, each having a forked prong at one end. The other ends are sharpened and put into the ground about eight and one-half feet apart. A strong cross-piece is put into the forks to make a ridgepole. Stringy bark is then arched over the pole to make the two sides, or in some cases is leaned up against it so that the hut has only one side and is a kind of lean-to. Paper bark is placed on top of the stringy bark to keep out the rain, and sand and logs are added to keep it secure.

Type 5.—A piece of stringy bark about eight to nine feet long and three or four feet wide is placed semicircularly in the ground, sand being thrown on each side of it to form a windbreak. On the concave side the earth is

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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342 outer two. They are placed at close intervals to form an almost continuous surface. Long pieces of stringy bark are then bent over the topmost ridgepole and down each side of the roof. On top of this are placed many thicknesses of paper bark, and finally stones and logs to make them fast.

The rafters are fastened to the ridgepoles by tying them with turtle rope and fiber string. They are sometimes made firm by making each with a forked end which is hooked on to the cross-piece, the two being tied together. Bark is used for the walls and sewn on to the edge of the floors and edge of the roof. The walls of the two ends of the house are only half filled in, so that the parts that remain open function as doors. Forked sticks are used as ladders.

[372] Even though this house is used in the hottest part of the year, many small fires are made on the ground beneath it, since it is primarily constructed to keep away mosquitoes which come in countless swarms at this time. The fires are so built that they smoke more than burn. Since the house is on high ground, running water caused by the large floods does not put the fires out.

342 After the rains, when mosquitoes are still bad, the house often consists
764 of only four piles with flooring. This latter type of structure is also used for platform burial when the corpse is not interred or placed in a tree; such a structure would be specially made for this purpose, and away from the camp.

342 Because this house is far more elaborate than any other type found in
174 northeastern Arnhem Land and has a very restricted distribution, and because of the known constant contact with the Malays who had pile dwellings, there comes a problem of whether it is of native invention or was brought by the Macassars. If one considers only the house itself without its related structures, there is a tendency to believe it comes from outside. This point of view does not orientate the invention to the rest of the material culture.

The essential elements of the mosquito house are: (1) the upright forked pole, and (2) the ridgepole connecting two forked sticks. The forked stick is found all over northern Australia and even southward. Baskets and other articles of the material culture are hung on it. The women use it when soaking the poisonous matter out of cycad palm nuts, and they lean it against the trunks of tall trees they wish to climb. In fact, it has a great variety of uses, and is a constant feature of native camps. The slightly more complex invention of two forked poles with a cross-piece is also found throughout Northern and down into Central Australia. It, too, is a constant feature of native camps and is used as a carryall, if trees are not available from which to hang things. The use of two parallel ridgepoles on four forked sticks as piles is only one step further in the elaboration of the essential idea of forked sticks with connecting ridgepoles. It seems, then, that the idea of a pile house is completely indigenous, although it

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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Usually when the trap is to be used an old man goes out into the swamp and stirs the fish up by walking around in the morass of ferns and moss. While he does this he feels with his toes in the mud and water at the roots of the fern trees for small fresh-water turtles and prawns.

6. Other Implements

Digging Stick.—The digging stick is used only by women and carried by them. It is normally about four feet long, but varies from three to six feet. It is made of ironwood and is sharpened at both ends. It is used by the women to dig for yams, roots, small lizards and marsupials. They also use it as a weapon in a camp brawl.

Fire Drills and Fire.—The only means of making fire possessed by the Murngin is the fire drill. The drill is composed of two parts, a hearth and a drill stick. The latter is carved into a cylinder, and the former is a rod flattened on one side and convex on the other. The normal length of both drill and hearth is two feet, but sometimes reaches three feet. The hearth is about one-half to one inch wide.

A small hole is cut in the hearth and an incision made so that when a spark is formed by the friction of the whirling drill it may be tipped out quickly. The drill stick is frequently incised with parallel lines. Both pieces are covered with red ocher.

When fire is to be made, dry paper bark is crumbled and formed into a small ball which can be held in the palm of the hand. A tiny bit of charcoal is placed in the hole in the hearth. The fire-maker squats over the stick, holding it in place with his feet while he whirls the drill with his hands. The end of the drill in contact with the hearth is slightly rounded; intense friction is created by rubbing the charcoal against the dry wood of the hearth. When a spark appears it is dumped into the ball of paper bark and blown on by the native or swung back and forth in the wind until the paper bark has caught fire.

Fire sticks are the permanent equipment of both men and women and are nearly always found in the personal baskets of each. They are not used, however, every time a man wishes to make a new fire, for fire brands of the inner core of a pandanus which burns like punk are usually carried by the men when they go on journeys.

When fire is to be used for cooking larger game such as emu, kangaroo, dugong, and turtle, a slight hole is excavated in the ground. Round smooth river stones about the size of a man's two fists are gathered and placed in the fire in the shallow pit. Sticks are put on top of them so that the fire continues burning. Dampened paper bark or green leaves are then placed on the fire. Large chunks of meat are put on top of the green leaves, then an upper covering of leaves and paper bark is added to prevent the direct contact of the fire from burning the meat and also to help steam the food. The hole is covered with sand so that a kind of earth oven has been made.

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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The soft bark of the giant tea-tree, commonly called paper-bark, is utilised for such purposes as the bandaging of wounds, the protection of spear points, the covering of huts, the carrying of babies, the parcelling of food, and the making of receptacles in which water is carried. 314

Fire is produced by wooden drills. The end of the drill is placed in a notch cut in a piece of soft-wood, which is held on the ground by the foot, and the drill is then spun between the palms of the hands. I have seen fire produced by this means in as short a time as 35 seconds. 372

Large dug-out canoes are made from the trunks of trees of several species, and in these canoes long voyages are made across the open sea. 501

The only musical instruments used, if they may be so termed, are the "Yiraki," or drone-pipe, and the "Bilma," or clap-sticks. The Yiraki is about four feet in length, and is constructed of a piece of wood about three inches in diameter which has been hollowed by termites. At the smaller end a mouthpiece is formed of beeswax. This instrument supplies a droning accompaniment during the singing of chants. No tune upon it is possible, its range being limited to three notes of the scale, which are produced by a variation of the wind pressure. 534

The Bilma are simply two pieces of hardwood, oval in section, and about one foot in length, which, being struck together, supply the "time" for chants and dances.

Sometimes two boomerangs are held in the one hand, separated by one or more fingers, and by a quick movement of the wrist are made to produce a rhythmic rattling.

In the manufacture of these various weapons and utensils a high degree of constructive skill and neatness of workmanship is evidenced. Practically all these articles are richly ornamented, and probably nowhere in Australia has aboriginal decorative art reached a finer development than in East Arnhem Land. 531

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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796 moving up and down with the swell of the water. The two actors
292 dance towards the *jelmalandji* and the boys, holding carved wands
535 that represent the pandanus shoots. They move forward slowly,
881 their "pokiti" slightly waving, like the pandanus gently swaying in the calm swirl of the "spring" waters. When their actions are quickened their heads shake violently, and this is the pandanus rustling and bending in the strong "spring" waters[7] resulting from the rains sent by Julunggul. The feathers at their apex are the snakes' heads, appearing between the pandanus clumps.

When they reach the *ba'uma* both actors kneel and are surrounded by the singing and stick-beating leader and other participants. They shake their "pokiti" until these become loose, and the leader knocks them off and rubs himself against the actors (that is, he is spiritually one with the totemic dancers). The young boys, and others who are not fully conversant with Kunapipi ritual, as well as visitors, are rubbed against the "pokiti" or against the decorated down on the actors' bodies; this contact transfers "power" (or the sacred essence of the Dreaming) from one to the other. Then the sacred *bukali* "power" (invocation) names are called over the actors, while they shake themselves, to the accompaniment of the beating sticks. Other dances follow, most of which concern the things seen by the Wauwalak at Muruwul.

Next comes the *djamala mareiin*, or ritual fire-throwing. The term
796 *djamala* serves as an important link in all Kunapipi rituals, here and
● 372 elsewhere, for although it has lost its real significance at Yirrkalla it
981 still includes the throwing of fire-brands. In central-western Northern Territory, for example, Kunapipi ritual is divided into morning (day) and evening (night) ceremonies, the former termed *wilbibi* and the latter *djamalara* (*djamala* being a variation).[8]

In the Yirrkalla version of the Kunapipi, the throwing of fire-sticks by older men across the sacred ground, and over the *ba'uma* in which the boys sit, symbolizes the lightning sent by Julunggul; the Snake flashes the lightning over the camp in which the Sisters are resting.

Then two actors dance forward, representing the Wauwalak Sis-
796 ters; one has a paperbark pad which is the "child". From one side
881 of the ground another actor appears; he is the Julunggul Snake, and moves slowly forward towards the "women", until he reaches

[192] 7. These strong waters are called secularly *ka'leia*, or in sacred speech *gumunggul*: the latter word is a corruption of the term *gumugu*, which is of very general use in the central-western Northern Territory Kunapipi. For a further definition see Chapters X and XI.

8. For a further example of the widespread use of this word, see R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section X. In that area it has been corrupted to *djama:lak* or *jamalak*, and refers to a secularized promiscuous ceremony. Real *djamalara* singing includes some of
[533] the most beautiful sacred rhythms in Aboriginal Australia.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
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The Djanggawul Myth

Djanggawul 'brother' and 'sisters', were hiding in their big shade.[1] 773
In the myth, these are called the Djanggawul Brothers. The women who came out of the Sisters are assumed to have gone out foraging for food in another direction.

Meantime, the Two Sisters had collected a lot of shells. When they waded back to dry land, they heard the whistle of the *djunmal* bird (a black, green and yellow mangrove bird), warning them that something was wrong. At once they knew that something had happened to their dilly bags, which contained the sacred *rangga*.[2]

'You know that *djunmal*, Sister,' the younger Sister asked. 'What is it crying for?'

'That bird cries to let us know,' answered the other. 'Perhaps something has happened to our sacred dilly bags. Maybe the fire has burnt them. We had better go back and look.'

They left what they were doing, and ran back towards their shade. The dilly bags were gone, and on the ground about the shade were the tracks of the men who had stolen them.

[1] That is, the Djanggawul Brother had a shade or hut, similar to that used on the *dua nara* ground, although he himself '"made" no dreaming'. All 'the beginning' belonged to the women, the Two Sisters, and all the dreamings really belonged to them. The Djanggawul Brother and his 'brothers' sat down at their shade and made fire ready to cook their food, for at that time it was the men's duty to collect all the food, and to prepare it for the women as well as for themselves.

In another version, we are told that the men and the Brother just sat there; for the Two Sisters and their 'sisters' (that is, women from their uteri) were holding a *wurtiin* sacred *nara* ceremony, which was their 'own business', to which the men could not come. The women, however, were fairly close to the men, for it is said that the men 'came over by themselves on top of the women's tracks', and entered their separate shade.

In their own sacred shade the women made fire, *rindjarei*, the sacred fire dreaming, [831
for fire comes from the redness of the women's vaginae. The twirling firestick in its 372]
groove is symbolic of coitus, because a man is warmed by lying between a woman's legs just as he is by a fire, since a woman's vulva is always 'hot'.

After their ceremony the women hung their fighting dilly bags, decorated with tasselled pendants of red parakeet feathers, on the limb of a tree, and went out to collect shell-fish. (Here the main text takes up the story.)

[2] The men sat listening in their shade; and when they heard no noise, no singing or dancing, they said to one another, 'All right. It is no good that we are men. It is no good that women should have that sacred bag and all the dreamings, and we should have nothing. We'll take over from those women.' They all agreed, 'Yes.'

So they came up to the women's sacred shade and went inside; and there they found all the dreamings, all the *rangga* and clan patterns. They began to dance and sing the sacred songs which they had learnt by listening to the women, and which are still sung to-day in the *dua nara*. As they sang, they looked in the direction the women had taken, but saw no sign of them. Then they took down the sacred dilly bag of the women and danced with it.

221 pations, and therefore, on the nature of their camps and
805 house types. It may be noted in passing that the seasonal
813 influence on their lives and occupations is well appreciated by the natives themselves, and that they divide the annual cycle into six or more phases or seasons which they name from the winds, the weather conditions, or from the food supplies which characterise them. And again, they will name these phases, and state without hesitation the appropriate occupational sites at each of them, and their activities and food supplies which depend upon these seasonal conditions, with an insight and a precision that no white man who is not a trained ecologist and well versed in botany and zoology, could approach.

[133] During the wet season the river courses rise quickly and
221 soon overflow their banks so that the country is flooded for
[137] miles. The grass, especially on the plains, grows rank and
342 high—often more than six feet—and the people are con-
361 centrated in semi-permanent wet season camps in which the population may exceed one hundred. Here they lead an almost sedentary existence in contrast with their active nomadic life in the south-east season. At this time they construct houses, sometimes of large size—thatched with bark of tea-tree (*Melaleuca*) or of stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetro-*
[352] *donta*). Some of these houses are well built and are provided
[372] with sleeping platforms under which fires can be lighted as a protection against mosquitoes. They are also equipped with racks to carry food and utensils. Each house type has its own traditional form, type of construction and distinctive name, and is often developed in adaptation to a particular environment, or is determined by the building materials available in the vicinity. Nine or ten types of houses or shelters are recognised in Arnhem Land. These vary from simple breakwinds built on the windward side in the "dry"

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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water-worn canyons—a wild, desolate region where only goannas find enough to eat and white cockatoos screech through the gorges.

Nevertheless, I found it fascinating to fly over this country—no one would toil through swamps and humid jungles if it were possible to fly over them in the coolness and comfort of a plane. Arnhem Bay is typical coastal country, low-lying and well-nigh impenetrable, but during the war years I grew accustomed to looking at it from R.A.A.F. Catalinas and watching its panorama unfold in a succession of meandering grass-choked creeks and swamps, with a narrow ribbon of jungle dividing them from the waters of the bay. White cockatoos circled over black clumps of jungle, white ibises fished in the shallow swamps, and egrets waded on the mudflats and made it appear like a garden of marguerites waving in the breeze.

Even the weather is surprising, and the climate accounts for the poverty of the country. Seven or eight months of the year are cool; that is when the dry, south-east monsoon blows in from the Pacific. Wind and warm sun parch the ground and bush fires rage over the hills and sandy valleys, so that for weeks the sky is hidden in smoke haze and the setting sun is a blood-red ball. Yulengor start fires when hunting and cannot pass dry grass without firing it. It is a common practice for them to strip five or six feet of stringy bark from a tree, twist it into a stiff length, light one end and carry it like a walking stick, stabbing the fiery end into dry grass by the side of the track.

By October the winds are calm, humus has been licked up by the fires, a burning sun completes the destruction, and the country is a barren ash-heap. December brings a change in the wind and, heavily laden with moisture, it blows in from the north-west, flooding the country with torrential rain of from forty to seventy inches. Its immediate effect on dried-out Arnhem Land is devastating, as loose soil, sand, ash, and

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224 I found their methods of kangaroo hunting to be the most interesting of all, and I know the men would agree with this estimate. Kangaroos are comparatively easy prey during the wet season, when long grass covers the hillsides. A hunter [302] often smears white clay over his head, for clay is an effective camouflage, and a man so daubed is scarcely distinguishable from burnt-off tree stumps with their occasional unburnt patches of white. The big hunt is carefully planned, and there are intricate methods for driving, ambushing, and trapping kangaroos when the rains are over and the herbage is dry. Wide valleys or plains are selected for the hunt, and [372] a patch is burnt out in the centre. Meanwhile, three or four men run a wide circle of fire around the burnt-out area, and hunters with spears and firesticks light many fires inside the outer wall of smoke and gradually close in toward the centre, leaving behind them a wall of roaring flames and blinding smoke which terrifies and drives all the small animals, reptiles, and kangaroos into the central death-trap where they are speared.

225 Most Arnhem Land Yulengor hunt for sea-food both on [177] shore and from canoes. Metal has been filtering into the country for two centuries, and this has made hunting easier. [411] Once they fished with pronged hardwood spears and made wooden harpoons for the soft-skinned green turtle, dugong, [325] and porpoise, but they now grind metal harpoons that are able to pierce even the hard carapace of the shell-back turtle. For turtle hunting, a harpoon is tied to bush rope and [411] fitted into the end of a long spear haft, and when a turtle is sighted on the surface the canoe is paddled quietly toward it with a man standing in the bow ready for the strike.

Dugong are hunted at night, and canoes skim around the sea-grass feeding-grounds till an animal is sighted and harpooned. The flesh resembles pork, and the animals sometimes measure up to twelve feet in length and weigh half a 136 ton. A dugong suckles her calf while clasping it to her with

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211 [242] Nomads have not acquired the art of recording their thoughts, but they make use of the well-known 'letter-stick', and those I have received have been handed over with a certain breathlessness, as if they were charmed missives. Their use is intended to lend an importance to a message, which however cannot be deciphered by the recipient. All he sees on the flat oblong chip of wood is a series of carved lines, circles, and crosses, probably partly covered by a coat of red ochre. After an appropriate examination of the stick the bearer is invariably called on to decode the message. He obligingly takes it, and pointing to one mark says that it represents the writer, that another is for his brother, that several strokes refer to a number of days or lunar months, and that a wide cut is a request for a canoe or an indication of the strength of a raiding party. Marks on letter-sticks merely remind the bearer of points in the message he is conveying. The last line on all letter-sticks sent to me invariably ended with the request: 'Please send me some tobacco.'

[648] Before leaving Darwin on the first trip to east Arnhem Land, I visited three brothers who were serving sentences for having murdered Japanese fishermen in Caledon Bay. They were glum and disinterested till I told them where I was going, and they then asked me to take a letter-stick to their father. Weeks later I delivered this message on an isolated beach near Caledon Bay, and that night the camp sang and wailed over memories revived by the letter-stick.

207 • 372 Probably the most popular of all delusions concerning the nomad is that he sends messages by means of smoke. I am not aware that any aboriginal has ever sent any coded signal by smoke; yet, on the other hand, they will interpret smoke-fire as indicating the presence of visitors and will light fires for an easily understood purpose, or in accordance with a pre-arranged plan. Fires that break out unexpectedly and perhaps are due to smouldering logs bursting [775]

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into flame long after a bush-fire has passed, are in all seriousness attributed to mischievous spirits. All fires thus have some meaning, and though their significance may be wrongly interpreted, they do play an important part in elementary signalling. 202 372 [775]

A family brought the news to Yirrkala that a woman and her child were dangerously ill near Port Bradshaw, and as Mataman was going that way a few days later, he promised to let the local people know about the patients by smoke-fires. If they were dead he was to light a smoke-fire, and if they had recovered he was to do nothing. When great clouds of smoke billowed over the hills the following day, it was assumed that the woman was dead, and the usual wailing and mourning songs were sung. However, a few days later the woman and her child walked into Yirrkala and explained that Mataman had been hunting kangaroos and had lit a fire to smoke them out. [765]

Friendly visitors invariably light fires to give warning of their approach; otherwise they might be mistaken for enemies, and speared. In any case they do not know where their hosts are hunting, and they light fires to invite an answer from the camp they intend visiting. Smoke is also sent up as a warning signal when anything untoward happens, and a passing lugger is enough to start a line of fires. As each party of hunters sees the boat, they light fires to warn their friends. [574]

The rapidity with which detailed messages are passed from one camp to another has led to the assumption that information has been sent by secret smoke-signals. But the message-carriers are human. I have known men and women to travel long distances by night and, by taking short cuts, to be on the beach the following morning to meet the lugger after we had sailed some sixty miles overnight. [203]

A government officer was due to arrive at the station by air, and as the Yulengor had not previously seen an aeroplane

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they were excited and nervous. Some were scared and fled along the coast, but they had agreed to light smoke-fires when they saw the plane. Half an hour before the plane landed their smoke went up, and afterwards we heard that Yulengor fifty miles away, who had known nothing about the coming of the plane, had lit fires when they saw it, and the signals had been repeated nearer and nearer to us. I told the visitor that we had been warned of his approach by smoke-signals, and thinking of it, in the common manner, as being one of the mysterious and secret accomplishments freely attributed to aborigines, he asked: 'And what did they say about me?'

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out it is assumed to be worth while patching him up; his organs are pushed inside and the hot spear-thrower, bark-pulp, and clay-plaster treatment is applied.

Severe constipation, with distended stomach, is known as 'or wah', and for this the leaves of a dry jungle tree are mixed in water and the fluid rubbed over the body. Crushed leaves are inserted in the nostrils and piled on the chest whilst the remaining fluid is poured into the ears. It is said to be essential for the patient to remain supine, so as to allow the fluid to run from the nostrils and ears down through the spinal column into the stomach. A second method is to make a meal from a long, spiral shellfish (*Cerithieder Telescopium telescopian*) found on the mudflats. It is good food at any time, but it is also regarded as a cure for constipation, in aiding the passage of fibrous foods; it has the smoothness of the oyster and looks like glutinous slime.

A third treatment is carried out by building a low platform of sticks, covering it with swamp grass, placing the patient on top and covering him with sheets of paper-bark. A fire is made under the structure from the wood, leaves, and bark of the 'boit' or iron-wood tree. This particular tree is always used for the fire. (It is the hardest wood I have seen, and when it is being milled severe irritation is caused to both nose and throat.) The patient spends most of the day on the grille, and from time to time is turned over; at sundown he is removed and plunged into a nearby creek or waterhole. Most assuredly he can expect to feel stimulated.

Diarrhoea is not a common ailment, for natural wandering habits reduce the danger of infection. Nevertheless, epidemics do occur, maybe through over-eating a good catch of turtle, or through hunger driving the food-gatherers to eat decomposing fish or meat washed ashore. A succulent herb, 'brokpili', found near fresh water swamps, is then crushed and mixed with water, and the rusty red mixture

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to include natural body functions, that forms the basis of the nomads' ceremonial culture and is preserved in narrative-songs. At Port Bradshaw the Junkgowa made dilly-bags, yam sticks, feather belts, and armlets, and left two lots of children to guard the totems and multiply into the Kalpu and Reratjingo hordes. Today these warlike clans regard the site as their mutual totem centre, though they have nothing else in common. Ten children were born to the Junkgowa at Yallangbarra, but as they were sexless a further miracle was required to change them into normal beings. To do this the Ancestors carved ten effigies; they hid half of them in the long grass on the dunes and laid the remainder in a depression in the sand. Those in the grass grew beards and turned into males, as did five of the sexless children; those in the smooth sand remained smooth faced and exerted a similar influence on the remaining sexless children, who thereupon became females.

Loaded with totems, the Junkgowa turned westward and came to a large granite dome by the shores of Arnhem Bay where they left totems and the nuclei of hordes. This rock is now a totem and preserves the mali of a yam that was first planted beneath its shelter. Between Arnhem and Buckingham Bays a goanna was set free, and the art of making sacred yam sticks and dilly-bags was taught to children born and abandoned there. Fire also was introduced, and its mali was embodied in a totem.

Just how the nomad discovered fire remains a mystery, but today his fire-making is a simple though skilful art. Like the first Ancestors, the operator rests a short softwood stick on the ground, and sitting behind it he holds it firmly in place with his foot. In the upper surface of the softwood he bores a shallow hole and makes a small cut to form a channel in one side of it. A pointed hardwood stick is placed in the hole and twirled rapidly backwards and forwards between his palms so that the friction causes the softwood fibre to

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● 372 smoulder. This falls on a handful of dead grass which is held in the wind, or blown on, till it bursts into flame. I have seen the whole operation of fire-making completed in as little as twenty-three seconds, or in scarcely more time than it takes to open a box of matches, select one and strike it.

*773 On their way westward the Junkgowa raised a circular granite dome into which they fused the lesser spirit of the sun. Yulengor beat this sun-totem when the country becomes saturated and impassable in the wet season, and it is said that this causes the water to evaporate.

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Away in the west a rising cloud of smoke interested the Junkgowa, and they made their way toward it and came on an old Man sitting by his camp fire. He was startled by the Women; the more so when they spoke to him in his own tongue and asked what he was doing.

His reply was noncommital: 'I sit by myself.'

'Yes, we can see that. Are there no other Men here?'

In a burst of confidence the hermit told them that he was the last of his horde: 'All my brothers are dead. They died from sores leaving white patches on their skin. Whenever they scratched themselves, the skin came off, and then they died.' Daunted neither by his rusticity nor his lugubrious tale, the Women made a wind-break shelter and camped a few yards from his fire. Next night they ventured a little nearer, and on the third night they suggested to him that it would be more sociable if they were all to camp together rather than keep two camp-fires alight. He agreed to the suggestion, and as the dawn was breaking twins were born to each of the Junkgowa. Many children were sent out from this camp to inaugurate new hordes, but first they were trained in arts and crafts, beliefs and magic, and received totems, ceremonial secrets, and Stone Age implements. When the old Man died, the Women experienced again the restless urge to go westward, and they broke camp and